



Governor's Office of Highway Safety

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY LAUNCHES NEW DEMONSTRATION PROJECT TO REDUCE IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES AND INJURIES IN TUCSON AND SOUTH TUCSON

Across the nation and in Arizona, motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death for Latino males between the ages of 1-44. Latino males are eight times more likely to die from injuries sustained in a crash than males from other ethnic groups. In Arizona, Latinos represent 26% of all traffic crash fatalities.

The main factor contributing to this disproportionately high number of traffic fatalities and injuries may be from a lack of knowledge among Hispanic drivers of State traffic or DUI laws, of highway safety issues, and of the serious consequences of impaired driving. This is sometimes compounded by language and cultural barriers, and a lack of bilingual service providers and educational materials focusing on traffic safety.

The Governor's Highway Safety (GOHS) launched a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) funded project entitled, "Demonstration and Evaluation of Strategies to Reduce Impaired Driving Fatalities and Injuries within the Hispanic Population." The slogan of the thirty-month campaign is, ***Pass The Keys/Pasa Las Llaves***. The program seeks to demonstrate effective strategies, including high visibility enforcement, education and communication, in order to reduce alcohol-related motor vehicle death and injury in Hispanic communities. The program also will collect data from Hispanics on their knowledge and perceptions of DUI issues. This is a demonstration project designed to serve as a model program for other communities within the nation to emulate.

Under the ***Pass The Keys/Pasa Las Llaves*** initiative, funds will be used to enforce DUI laws for the entire population of Tucson and South Tucson; not just Hispanics. Officers from Tucson Police and South Tucson Police will conduct intensive enforcement campaigns during peak hours to locate impaired drivers along roadways where data shows high numbers of alcohol related crashes or high rates of impaired driving arrests. By targeting these high crash and incident areas all residents and ethnic groups will be affected.

Secondly, Tucson Police officers will target all offenders with outstanding impaired driving arrest warrants. Currently thousands of area residents are driving on a suspended license for failure to appear in court. Studies show that motorists driving on a suspended or revoked license are 3.7 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash and are 66 percent more likely to leave the scene of the crash.

Using the slogan ***Pass The Keys/Pasa Las Llaves*** the GOHS is partnering with several community-based agencies to promote a communications and education campaign with social-marketing and enforcement messages. In the process, GOHS will develop culturally-relevant Spanish messaging, all aimed at reducing impaired driving death and injuries in the Hispanic community. In doing so, it hopes to raise awareness of the high costs of a DWI conviction in financial and emotional terms.

One of the goals of the project is to determine the most effective approach to deter Hispanics from driving impaired, whether it is social-marketing campaigns focused on the effects that drinking and driving has on the family of the driver, or publicized high-visibility enforcement efforts. Director Richard Fimbres of GOHS stated: "Our office recognizes the importance of reaching Latinos, from recently arrived immigrants to generations who have lived in Arizona since its founding, in an effort to develop culturally effective traffic safety programs and to ensure language barriers are overcome. The end result of providing culturally competent public safety programs is lives saved for everyone in our community."

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